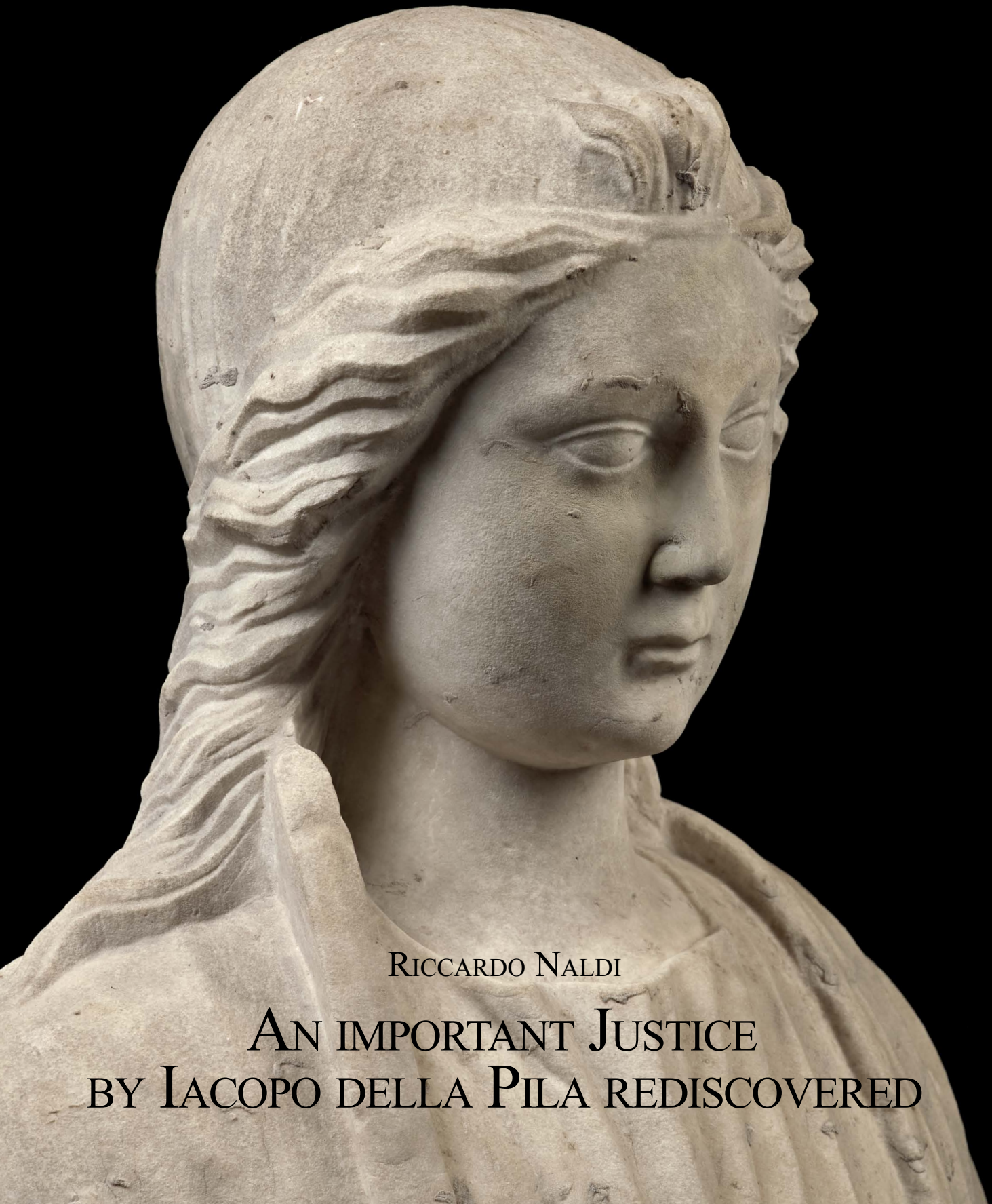


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RICCARDO NALDI

AN IMPORTANT JUSTICE
BY IACOPO DELLA PILA REDISCOVERED



IACOPO DELLA PILA DA MILANO

(Documented in Naples from 1471 to 1502)

Justice, 1473 c.

Marble, height 108 cm

A LOMBARD SCULPTOR IN THE ARAGONESE NAPLES

The rediscovered statue that we present for the first time here is carved in the round and shows a female figure holding in her right hand a sword, kept upright along her chest. This image is immediately recognisable as a personification of the virtue of *Justice*¹.

It is the work of a sculptor of great ability and rich figurative culture, who knows how to combine the classicist firmness of the structure of the figure with the refined treatment of the surface of the marble. This is made vibrant through the numerous and elaborate folds of the thin draperies, and through the gentle flowing of the hair, combed in elegant strands that wrap the neck until the shoulders. The marble is carved with the virtuosity of an engraver. The relief of the draperies is light and gentle, moved by waves similar to those of the water of a pond in which a stone has been thrown, and it allows us to perceive the anatomy of the body underneath. The surface is defined by the expert use of a thin chisel to delicately carve the hair, the traits of the face – almost abstract, as in an archaic mask – the details of the robes. This gives to the statue an arcane elegance and a preciousness of late Gothic descent. We can observe a peak of the ability of the sculptor along the proper left side of the figure, where, in the lower part of the cape, he enjoyed tracing with the chisel flowing, vibrating folds which in their succession convey the fascinating decorative richness of the Autumn of the Middle Ages. Further down, the tunic falls to the feet in straight, thick lines carved in deep relief and emulating the solid modelling of classical statuary.

The character of the figure, the style, the similar state of conservation of the marble, with the surface modified by a probable temporary outdoor collocation, establish an immediate link between this and another two *Virtues* (*Prudence* and *Temperance*) recently acquired by the Museo Nazionale di San Martino in Naples (figs. 3, 5). They are typical works of Iacopo della Pila, sculptor of Lombard origin working in Naples in the second half of the 15th century. He is documented there between 1471 and 1502, and is a protagonist of the Aragonese Renaissance in the second half of the Quattrocento, together with the other great Northern sculptor active in the Kingdom, Domenico Gagini². In the three images of *Virtues* – corresponding also for their height between 107 and 108 cm – we find the same manner of defining the monumental pose, of carving the folds, of describing the hair (figs. 3-5). The physiognomy too is the same: the high forehead, the elongated eyes with well defined eyelids, the straight and cutting nose, the small mouth (figs. 1-2). Some idiosyncratic stylistic features return in the three statues: the rounded shoulders, the shape of the thin fingers, the underlining of the details of the draperies and of the accessories. The original expressive features are more readable in the *Justice*, compared to the other two figures, because of the lively modelling of the surface and of the hair, of the depth of the chiaroscuro of the undercutting, and of the unbroken neck.

The two statues today in the Museo di San Martino, together with the third that has now come to surface again, are strictly related to the allegories of *Prudence*, *Justice*, and *Temperance* holding the sarcophagus of Diego Cavaniglia, first Count of Montella, member of the Cabanillas family from Valencia (their name was later Italianised as Cabaniglia or Cavaniglia), settled in the Kingdom of Naples around the mid-15th century, at the time of Alfonso of Aragon³. The Cavaniglia distinguished themselves through their military valour, which earned them lands and titles. The tomb of Diego Cavaniglia, realised between 1481 and 1492, is in the church of San Francesco in Folloni (province of Avellino) and is universally accepted as a work by Iacopo della Pila (fig. 6)⁴. Despite having been moved and readapted over the centuries, this monument kept its original structure and allows us to imagine how the three Virtues that we reunite here in a single group were displayed. This type of tomb had a great success with the high nobility of the Kingdom of Naples, because of the combination of an architecture influenced by Renaissance classicism with elements like the canopy, which recalled the magnificence of 14th century Anjou sepulchres.

The remains of another tomb in the third chapel of the left nave of the church of Santa Maria di Monte Oliveto (today Sant'Anna dei Lombardi) in Naples have been attributed to Iacopo della Pila. This is the tomb of Giovanni Cavaniglia, second Count of Troia and Lord of Montella, elder brother of Diego and deceased before him in 1473⁵. We can reconstruct the story of the dismantling and redisplay of the various parts of this important monument, which the historic sources describe as an “imposing sepulchre” (“maestoso sepolcro”)⁶, and as a “burial of the

whitest marble” (“sepoltura di bianchissimo marmo”)⁷. In this manner, we can formulate a very solid and credible hypothesis that the three *Virtues* (the two in the Museo di San Martino, together with this one just rediscovered) all come from the tomb of Giovanni Cavaniglia. Today, in the church of Monte Oliveto remain only the lying figure of the deceased, a slab that was front of the sarcophagus, with three clipei containing from the left to the right *Saint John the Evangelist*, the *Virgin and Child*, and *Saint Jerome*, and two heraldic shields that were mounted to the sides of the coffin. Although fragmentary, these remains suggest a structure similar to that of Folloni, with the deceased lying over a sarcophagus decorated on the front with three figures and on the sides with two slabs with the arms of the family. The typology and the dimensions of the three *Virtues* induce us to believe that also in this tomb they were underneath the sarcophagus, following the specific characteristics of the burials designed by Iacopo della Pila. The statue at the centre of this study fits perfectly with those from the Museo di San Martino for its iconography too: an image of *Justice*, composing with *Prudence* and *Temperance* the same trio of *Virtues* holding the sarcophagus of Diego Cavaniglia in Folloni (figs. 3-6).

The hypothesis of the provenance of the two *Virtues* (and consequentially of our *Justice*) from the tomb of Monte Oliveto has been convincingly advanced by scholars in more than one instance⁸. The architectural history of the Neapolitan church explains the current fragmentary condition of the monument of Giovanni Cavaniglia. We know that the building was radically refurbished in the penultimate decade of the 17th century, for the decision of the Abbot, Silvestro Chiocca, who had the structure of the side chapels and of their Renaissance marble decoration modified⁹. Altars and tombs were dismembered by the architect Gennaro Sacco, relocated and often reassembled in fragmentary or arbitrary form in different parts of the building. The reshaping of the Cavaniglia chapel was certainly done at the time of Abbott Chiocca, because the late Baroque altar placed in it copies the general structure of those of the other chapels of the nave, designed by Sacco¹⁰. We must therefore draw the conclusion that the burial of Giovanni Cavaniglia was dismantled at the end of the 17th century and that, as in the case of other monuments from the church of Monte Oliveto, the *Virtues* underneath the sarcophagus were not part of the new display and went missing at an early stage. The reassembling of the Cavaniglia tomb is in any case registered already in the mid 19th century¹¹. The style, too, supports this hypothesis of a provenance of the three *Virtues* from the Cavaniglia tomb. The tone of the statues, still intensely Lombard and at the same time delicately Late Gothic, fits perfectly with the date of 1473, the year of death of Count Giovanni II. This date is also very early in the Neapolitan career of Iacopo della Pila, who is documented in the city from 1471.

The different state of conservation of the skin of the marble of the three *Virtues* and of the parts of the Cavaniglia tomb left in the church of Monte Oliveto can be justified by the fact that they were, for a moment of their life, placed in an outdoors location. It has actually been suggested that the *Virtues* were reused to decorate the base of the spire (a “guglia”, an architectural structure built in the centre of a square or cloister) where the *Virgin and Child* attributed to Domenico Gagini, originally part of the Vassallo chapel of the church of Monte Oliveto, was placed. A rich evidence from epigraphs and literature shows that the base had eight pedestals with eight statues, described in more than one instance as “antique” and coming from dismembered tombs from the church¹². The spire was built in the middle of the cloister so called “of the columns” (the oldest of the monastery, adjacent to the church) according to a design by the architect Muzio Naclerio in 1738 – as witnessed by the dedicatory epigraph – and was donated, between 1820 and 1826, to the convent of the Immaculate Conception near the church of Sant’ Eframo Nuovo¹³.

If, as it seems logical to suggest, the statues coming from the tomb of Giovanni Cavaniglia were mounted on the basement of the spire¹⁴, the outdoor location would explain the different state of conservation from the parts that remained inside the church. The reuse in a late Baroque devotional and decorative scheme of different typology and function would also justify another peculiarity which, besides the style and the condition, links the three statues, which is that their attributes have been reworked. *Temperance* has been transformed in *Faith*, *Prudence* has lost the snake, and the globe in the left hand of the rediscovered *Justice* has been modified. The sphere has been reshaped in a knot of fabric, with a hole drilled in it to fix a new attribute, now lost.



Notes

1. Marble, 108 cm. high. The statue comes from the collection of Raymond Regnault (1902-1966), President of the Société d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de la Manche from 1951 to 1959. The collection, kept in the Manor of Bois Marcel in Saint-Lô, was auctioned on 16-18 September 2017 (lot 59, as «Italy, 15th century»).
2. R. Naldi, *Due Virtù, e qualche notizia, di Iacopo della Pila*, in *Percorsi di conoscenza e di tutela. Studi in onore di Michele D'Elia*, edited by F. Abbate, Naples 2008, pp. 111-126.
3. F. Scandone, *I Cavaniglia, conti di Troia e di Montella*, in «Archivio storico per le province napoletane», XLVIII, 1923, pp. 136-218.
4. R. Naldi, *Iacopo della Pila e collaboratore, Sepolcro di Diego Cavaniglia, I conte di Montella. Montella (Avellino), chiesa del convento di San Francesco a Folloni*, in *Capolavori della Terra di Mezzo. Opere d'arte dal Medioevo al Barocco*, exhibition catalogue (Avellino, Complesso Monumentale ex Carcere Borbonico, 28 April-30 November 2012), edited by A. Cucciniello, Naples 2012, pp. 89-92, n. 15, with complete bibliography.
5. R. Causa, *Contributi alla conoscenza della scultura del '400 a Napoli*, in *Sculture lignee nella Campania*, exhibition catalogue in Naples, edited by F. Bologna e R. Causa, (Naples, Palazzo Reale 1950), Napoli 1950, pp. 105-150 (p. 119). Fundamental for a stylistic analysis of the tomb is H.R. Leppien, *Die neapolitanische Skulptur des späteren Quattrocento*, doctoral thesis, University of Tübingen, 1960, I, pp. 111-112.
6. C. de Lellis, *Aggiunta alla Napoli Sacra dell'Engenio* [...], IV, Biblioteca Nazionale of Naples, manuscript X.B.23., c. 56r.
7. S. Ammirato, *Delle famiglie nobili napoletane*, I, Florence 1580, p. 41.
8. R. Naldi, *Due Virtù*, cit.; M. Tarallo, *Santa Maria di Monteoliveto a Napoli, dalla fondazione (1411) alla soppressione monastica: topografia e allestimenti liturgici*, doctoral thesis, XXVI cycle, University of Naples «Federico II», 2013/2014, pp. 262-263.
9. G. Ceci, *Nella chiesa di Monteoliveto*, in «Rassegna storica napoletana», II, 1934, pp. 205-212.
10. C. Cundari, *I rilievi*, in C. Cundari (a cura di), *Il complesso di Monteoliveto a Napoli. Analisi, rilievi, documenti*, with an historical essay by A. Venditti, Rome 1999, p. 331; M. Tarallo, *op.cit.*, pp. 254-264.
11. L. Catalani, *Le chiese di Napoli*, II, Naples 1853, pp. 58-59, remarks that the tomb had been restored in a period later than the date of its construction (“ristaurata in epoca posteriore”).
12. M. Tarallo, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-117. A manuscript of 1778 by Marcello Oretti (Bologna, Biblioteca dell'Archiginnasio, M. Oretti, ms. B.165, [documents relating to Monte Oliveto]), describes the spire: “Pyramid with numerous marble statuettes removed from the sepulchres of the church”. (“Piramide con varie statuette di marmo levate da' mausolei della chiesa”); another description by G. Sigismondo, *Descrizione della città di Napoli e suoi borghi*, II, Naples 1788, p. 240, says:” a small spire of white marble, with various antique statuettes around” (“una piccola guglia di bianchi marmi, con varie antiche statuette di marmo all'intorno”).
13. F. Divenuto, *Un inedito del Settecento: il Ritiro della Concezione a Materdei*, in «Napoli nobilissima», III s., XXI, 1982, pp. 94-100 (pp. 98-99).
14. As argued by M. Tarallo, *op. cit.*, pp. 114-115, note 194.

Credits

Figs. 1-2, 6: Author archive

Figs. 3, 5: Fabio Speranza, Naples

Fig. 4: Matthew Hollow, figs. pp. 1, 2, 5, 8



Fig. 1 - Iacopo della Pila
Temperance (reworked as *Faith*)
Detail. Naples, Museo Nazionale di San Martino



Fig. 2 - Iacopo della Pila
Prudence
Detail. Naples, Museo Nazionale di San Martino



Fig. 3 - Iacopo della Pila
Temperance (reworked as *Faith*)
Naples, Museo Nazionale di San Martino



Fig. 4 - Iacopo della Pila
Justice
Private collection



Fig. 5 - Iacopo della Pila
Prudence
Naples, Museo Nazionale di San Martino



Fig. 6 - Iacopo della Pila
Tomb of Diego Cavaniglia, First Count of Montella
Montella (Avellino), church of the convent of San Francesco a Folloni



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Malines (Brabant)

Scene from the Parable of the Prodigal Son
Around mid-16th century

High-relief, alabaster, cm 25 × 28.5

Provenance: Florence, private collection

This excellent high-relief in alabaster narrates in the tightest of sequences the final part of the Parable of the Prodigal Son. The scene, in architectural terms, in which the final episode of the parable is told, shows, in the most minute detail, a renaissance-style *loggia*, sitting upon a high and decorated base, with grooved columns and a wooden, coffered ceiling. The grooved appearance of the relief would indicate that the work had been part of the cymatium of a more articulated object; an altar for private devotion that came in well-defined and precise versions and was part of the production of holy objects in Brabant workshops. It was particularly and, above all, favoured by the sculpture workshops in the city of Malines that were specialised in inlaid alabaster. The impeccable technique, both highly skilled and fluid combines finely with the refined forms in the composition as a whole, based upon a famous Flemish engraving. The Italianate style of the architecture and the figures would point to an artist who was part of the entourage of Jean Mone (c. 1485/90-1550), the sculptor who was able to combine the gothic traditions of Flanders with the harmony and classicism found in Italian art, much-favoured and supported by Margaret of Austria, during the years of her reign in the Low Countries (1507-1530).

Summary from the essay by Serenella Castri

Related literature:

M. K. WUSTRACK, *Die Mechelner Alabaster Manufaktur des 16. und frühen 17. Jahrhunderts*, Lang, Frankfurt am Main & Bern 1982.

A. HUYSMANS (edited by), *La sculpture des Pays-Bas meridionaux et de la Principaute de Liège, XV et XVI siècles*, exhibition catalogue (Brussels, Musée royal d'Art et d'Histoire, November 2000), Musée royal d'Art et d'Histoire, Barcelona 2000.

R. EIKELMANN (edited by), «Desgleichen ich kein gesehen»: *Conrat Meit - Bildhauer der Renaissance*, exhibition catalogue (Munich, Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, 1 December 2006 - 18 March 2007), Hirmer, Munich 2006.

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Pierre Puget

Bust of a man all'antica

Marble

This bust of a man evokes the dignity characteristic of certain illustrious men from antiquity (slide 1).¹ This feeling is conveyed both by sitter's intense gaze and by the simplicity of his dress – two elements that stress the moral dimension of this portrait. The bust may portray either an orator or a philosopher, in any case a person from the public life of ancient Greece. However, it does not seem to refer to a precise prototype.

The artist's approach, who engages with antiquity towards seventeenth-century expressive models, is purely evocative. In this work, he freely uses a plurality of both Greek and Roman sources.² The typology of beard, the hairdo and the pronounced lineaments refer to late-Hellenistic models, i.e. the Laocoon (slide 2). At the same time, the furrowed brow, the pursed lips and the violent torsion of the face towards left recall Caracalla's iconography (slide 3-4). The dress is not referable to a specific category (chiton, toga...), but it still perfectly reminds the antique. The only element that indicates a Greek contextualisation are the long beard and hair, which are rarer in the Roman environment.

Seventeenth-century artists were deeply familiar with antique sculptures, which represented limitless iconographical and stylistic sources. Sculptors were usually asked to restore them, and sometimes they were explicitly required to emulate them. They would either produce sculptures and busts all'antica to integrate an

¹ The work is 71 cm high, including the original base (15,5 cm).

² On the possibility of distinguishing between the Greek and the Roman manners by seventeenth-century artists in the reception of antique sculpture see Donatella Livia Sparti, *I limiti del Classicismo: Duquesnoy, Boselli, Poussin e la cosiddetta "maniera greca"*, in *Le componenti del classicismo secentesco. Lo statuto della scultura antica*, a cura di Leonarda di Cosmo e Lorenzo Faticcioni, Roma, Bentivoglio, 2013, pp. 211-241.

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incomplete series or they would create works ex novo to satisfy several patrons' passion for antiquity.³ In doing so, they would not necessarily refer stylistically to a model (or models). Artists, in fact, had a high degree of freedom, as the dynamic drapery of our bust – incompatible with antique sculpture – demonstrates. Among the several candidates who could have produced our bust, the French sculptor Pierre Puget (Marseille, 1620-1694) stands out. This bust can be confronted with other sculptures by this artist presenting male subjects all'antica or extrapolated from mythological episodes. Focusing our attention only on the heads and busts all'antica – sculpted many times by Puget – it is possible to find several correspondences with our portrait. In particular, our sitter's physiognomy can be confronted with the *Head of Philosopher* that Puget carved during one of his Roman trips (1662), today at the Cleveland Museum of Art (slide 5).⁴ This work is a free interpretation of the Greek philosopher Chrysippus' type, to which the artist adds some elements borrowed from Roman portraits of the Republican era. Moreover, some stylisations recall Roman Baroque sculptures.⁵ The two busts share not only the heterogeneity of their visual sources, but also the rendering of their faces, both characterised by furrowed brows and pursed lips.

Puget produced this kind of portraits also during a sojourn in Genoa (1660 ca. – 1669).⁶ The series of busts probably commissioned to him by Vincenzo Spinola is particularly famous. Spinola's inventory (1689) documents eleven busts by Puget and one by Filippo Parodi, who was clearly called to complete the work after Puget left the city.⁷ Even though the document does not specify the sitters of the portraits, seven busts with non-homogeneous subjects have been connected to this series thanks to the analysis of Spinola family's inheritances.⁸

³ Jean Bialostocki, *L'Antico: regola della natura nel Seicento*, in *Il Classicismo. Medioevo, Rinascimento e Barocco*, Atti del colloquio "Cesare Gnudi" (Bologna, 1986), a cura di Elena de Luca, Bologna, Nuova Alfa Editoriale, 1993, in particolare pp. 262-263; Jennifer Montagu, *Roman Baroque sculpture. The Industry of art*, Yale University Press, New Haven – London, 1989, pp. 151-172; Henning Wrede, *L'Antico nel Seicento*, in *L'Idea del Bello. Viaggio per Roma nel Seicento con Giovan Pietro Bellori*, catalogo della mostra (Roma, marzo-giugno 2000), a cura di Evelina Borea e Lucilla de Lachenal, Roma, De Luca, 2000, in particolare pp. 12-14.

⁴ On the base there is the inscription: "P. Puget S. Romae / 1662"

⁵ Guy Walton, *Pierre Puget in Rome: 1662*, «The Burlington Magazine», Vol. 111, No. 799 (Oct., 1969), p. 582.

⁶ On the relationship between Puget and the Genoese environment also in the two following decades see Klaus Herding, *Les activités de Pierre Puget à Gênes: nouvelles recherches*, «Gazette des beaux-arts», 6, 2008, pp. 89-118.

⁷ For the first mention of this inventory see Venanzio Belloni, *Undici sconosciute opere del Puget*, in «La Squilla: periodico bimestrale dei francescani di Recco», LV, 6, 1979, pp. 11-12.

⁸ The busts of *Young Augustus* e *Marcus Aurelius* (Genoa, Musei di Sant'Agostino) and of *Augustus Emperor* e *Livia* (Genoa, Ospedale di San Martino), attributed to Puget by Paola Rotondi Briasco (*Sculptures inconnues a Gênes attribuées a Pierre Puget*, «Gazette des beaux-arts», 100, 51, 1958, pp. 141-148), have been associated with Spinola's inventory by Venanzio Belloni (*La grande scultura in marmo a Genova: secoli XVII e XVIII*, Genova, GBG, 1988, pp. 135-136). Likewise, the *Warrior King* (Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada), for a long time in the French artist's catalogue, the unpublished bust *Vitellius*, identified with the portrait sculpted by Parodi (private collection) and, even though of lower quality, a portrait of *Caracallas* in the Musei di Strada Nuova in Palazzo Tursi cfr. Lorenzo Principi, *Filippo Parodi's Vitellius: style iconography and date*, in *Filippo Parodi, 1630-1702, Genoa's Bernini a bust of Vitellius: "undeci de essi busti sono di Monsu Puget, et un di Filippo Parodi"*, catalogo della mostra (Genova, Museo di Palazzo Reale, febbraio 2016), a cura di Davide Gambino e Lorenzo Principi, Firenze, Bacarelli & Botticelli 2016, pp. 31-68. Si veda anche Davide Gambino, *From Strada Nuova to Cremonino: Vitellius and his travel through the ages*, in *Ibidem*, pp. 73-87.

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As for the portrait traditionally identified with *The young Augustus* (Genoa, Museum of Sant'Agostino) – but the observations are also valid for a nucleus of four imperial portraits today in the Museum of Sant'Agostino and in the Ospedale di San Martino – art critics have stressed the artist's ability to create "a portrait in the antique 'taste', but that does not find analogies in the antique".⁹ This consideration can be associated with our bust, which also presents a delicate link with Augustus' portrait in the relationship between nose and mouth (slide 6).¹⁰ Moreover, the *Warrior bust* (Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada), and *Vitellius' bust* (private collection) – the latter attributed to Parodi – have been considered the result of the assimilation of different iconographies from both antique and contemporary sources in a recent study.¹¹

Puget produced this kind of works again in his late career, sculpting *Homer's* and *Caton's Heads* (Lyon, Académie des sciences, belles-lettres et arts). The latter, especially in its terracotta version (slide 7), shares with our bust the typology of iris and the realism in the carving, especially visible in the eyebrows, in the round nose and in the full lips.¹²

The analogies with Puget's work are not only linked to physiognomic elements, but also refer to the style chosen for the clothing. The depth and the orography of the drapery, characterised by profound carvings and by a cloth folded multiple times, can be confronted with the *August the Emperor's* mantle (Genoa, Ospedale di San Martino) (slide 8). Moreover, the triangular dips of the dress find some analogies with the wrinkles of the cloth between the legs of the *Milo of Croton* (1670-1682) (slide 9).

The exceptional style of the hairdo and of the beard can be compared to the medallion with *Louis XIV's portrait* in Marseille (Musée de Beaux-Arts). In this work, Puget does not use the drill in an emphatic way for the creation of the wig, choosing to define every lock by chisel (slide 10).

A plausible date for our bust refers to the decade the artist spent in Genoa, where the majority of patrons required works that followed an antiquarian taste.¹³

The passion of portraits all'antica in Genoa started during the Cinquecento and continued without interruption in the following century. This taste is witnessed by the numerous lists of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century busts that portray emperor Vitellius in several houses in Liguria.¹⁴ Moreover, the recent study on the collection

The only art historian doubting on the identification of the busts in the Museo di Sant'Agostino and in the Ospedale di San Martino with those mentioned in Spinola's inventory is Klaus Herding, *Documents d'archives concernant les activités de Puget à Gênes, Marseille et Paris*, «Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de l'Art Français», 2003, p. 179 e 184 nota 37.

⁹ Lauro Magnani, *Busto detto di Augusto Giovane*, in *Pierre Puget (Marsiglia 1620-1694). Un artista francese e la cultura barocca a Genova*, catalogo della mostra (Marsiglia, Musée des Beaux-Arts Ottobre 1994-gennaio 1995 e Genova, Palazzo Ducale, marzo – giugno 1995), Milano, Electa, 1995, cat. 8, p. 122.

¹⁰ More probably, a generic recall of the Julius-Claudius portrait genre. The portrait is considered by the workshop, with a particular reference to Daniello Solaro, following a model by Puget Cfr. *Ibidem*.

¹¹ Lorenzo Principi, *Filippo Parodi's Vitellius...*cit., pp. 55-61.

¹² It is not clear if the terracotta is preparatory for the marble or if it is a second version produced to be stored in Puget's workshop. See Luc Georget, *Catone*, in *Pierre Puget (Marsiglia 1620-1694)...*cit., cat. 17 pp. 144-145.

¹³ See Piero Boccardo, *Scultura antica e "moderna" e collezionismo fra XVI e XVIII secolo*, in *La scultura a Genova e in Liguria. Dal Seicento al primo Settecento*, Genova, Pagano, 1988, pp. 87-101.

¹⁴ Lorenzo Principi, *Filippo Parodi's Vitellius...*cit., pp. 58-61.

of antique and all'antica portraits of the noble Genoese Giovanni Vincenzo Imperiale (1582-1648)¹⁵ opens new perspectives on the analysis of this type of patronage.

It is not likely, however, that our bust was part of the above-mentioned collection of Vincenzo Spinola, since the dimensions of our portrait are smaller than the ones of all the other male busts connected to the series. Additionally, the base (original) does not find any referent in those of the other portraits, partially grouped also by looking at their original bases.¹⁶

Anyways, Puget's marble production still needs to be reconstructed – at the moment it counts less than 30 works – and it is highly probable that his Genoese sojourn will present further interesting surprises.

¹⁵ Alba Bettini, *A Palazzo e in Villa. Busti antichi e all'antica di Gio. Vincenzo Imperiale patrizio genovese*, Genova, Sagep editori, 2017.

¹⁶ Lorenzo Principi, *Filippo Parodi's Vitellius...cit.*, pp. 53-55. The height of the bust corresponds to Livia's bust; the other imperial portraits are almost 10 cm high. The dimensions of the Warrior King and of Vitellius, that probably were a pendant inside the series, are even higher.

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Aimé-Jules Dalou (1838-1902)

La Sagesse soutenant la Liberté

Bronze, 61 cm

signed & dated: *DALOU 1889* inscribed: (6) and stamped: *CIRE PERDUE AA HÉBRARD*

La Sagesse soutenant la Liberté was originally modelled in 1889 but re-worked to be incorporated into the Monument to Léon Gambetta (1838-1882). The monument was commissioned to be placed in Paris originally, but it was then decided to erect it in Bordeaux, in the Allée de Tourny. It was paid for with a public subscription and was completed in 1905, after Dalou's death. In 1961, the monument was dismantled and put in a storage of the Musée d' Aquitaine.

Dalou was a Republican and participated to the Commune. For this reason, he had to leave France, where he had been sentenced to hard labour for life, and spent ten years in Britain. Dalou returned to France only after a change in leadership facilitated a general amnesty in 1879. On his return, he received a number of commissions for large-scale public monuments, including *The Triumph of the Republic*, which still stands in the Place de la Nation in Paris.

The massive figure of Wisdom bearing the weight of a collapsing Liberty perfectly encapsulates Dalou's own Republican concerns and even on this small scale the monumentality of the strong forms is manifest. The bronze was cast from the plaster model now in the Petit Palais.

The Hébrard casts of this model are the finest and the rarest.

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Two female figures are dramatically paired in this sculpture. One is clothed, upright, muscular, and strong. Her costume—an antique helmet and a scaled cape (called an “aegis”) decorated with Medusa’s head—identifies her as the Roman goddess Minerva. She holds up a nearly naked figure, whose limbs are limp and whose hair is loose and disheveled. The latter wears a floppy cap associated with supporters of the French Revolution. The reference to French history suggests that the sculpture is not intended to illustrate a myth. Rather, it is an allegory, in which the figures personify abstract ideas: Minerva, goddess of Wisdom, supports the suffering figure of Liberty. Dalou returned to France only after a change in leadership facilitated a general amnesty in 1879. On his return, he received a number of commissions for large-scale public monuments, including The Triumph of the Republic, which still stands in the Place de la Nation in Paris.

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VINCENT MALO'

(Cambrai, 1602 / 07 - Roma, 1644)

Esther e Ahasuerus.

(Allegory of Justice, with posthumous portrait of Francesco de' Medici, Prince of Tuscany)

Oil on copper, 53 x 44 cm

Possibly monogrammed "VM" on the boot of the African bystander.

Provenance: Marchesa Carlotta Giustiniani Fasciotti Cattaneo Adorno, Genoa.

A pupil of Rubens and Anton van Dyck in Antwerp, Malò established himself as a successful painter in Italy. Historians have placed the probable date of his arrival in Italy in 1634. He worked mostly in Genoa, where, according to contemporary sources, he trained Anton Maria Vassallo. Our painting is an example of Malò's Italian works. The structure of the composition and the style of painting show the direct descentance from Rubens, through the activity of the young Van Dyck. The type of support and its size are significant. Copper allows the creation of translucid effects with colour, and of chromatism of great impact and drama.

The provenance of the painting is particularly prestigious. Carlotta Giustiniani Cattaneo Adorno, deceased in 1980, inherited three historic Genoese collections, including that of the Palazzo Cattaneo Adorno, with masterpieces by Rubens and Van Dyck.

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The subject of the painting is taken from the Bible. Ahasuerus, King of Persia, chooses Esther as Queen because of her beauty, but doesn't know that she is Jewish. She pleads with him to save the Jews of Persia and he agrees. The lily on Ahasuerus' crown is a telling detail. Although the Persian King does not seem to be the portrait of a real person, the lily is an allusion to France, and French is also the fashion of Esther's dress. The shape of the sleeves dates it to the end of the 1630s, therefore to a moment when Malò had left Genoa and, on the way to Rome, resided in Florence. As in many of his Genoese paintings, Malò seems to insert in this copper a portrait, specifically in the man to the far left of the scene, looking directly at us.



It is possible to suggest an identification of this sitter as Francesco de' Medici (1614-1634), fourth son of Grand Duke Ferdinando and of Cristina of Lorraine, therefore great grandson of Catherine de Medici, Queen of France, a detail that would fit well with the tone of celebration of France so evident in this copper by Malò'.

Francesco's brother, Lorenzo (1599-1648), was a well-known patron and collector, who might be responsible for commissioning this painting, in memory of his brother, from Malò'.

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